

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0094

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS, EG, JO, XF  
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON BEGIN'S AUTONOMY PLAN

1. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED COMMENT BY MAYOR FREIJ  
(77 JERUSALEM 2236) THAT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF BEGIN'S  
AUTONOMY PLAN (AS REPORTED IN PRESS) ARE ACTUALLY MORE DETRIMENTAL  
TO WEST BANK INTERESTS THAN CURRENT OCCUPATION. WE HAVE  
ATTEMPTED ANALYSIS OF BEGIN PLAN TO EXAMINE  
PROS AND CONS FROM WEST BANK STANDPOINT.

2. ADVANTAGES TO WEST BANKERS: PERHAPS PRINCIPAL  
ADVANTAGE MIGHT BE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFIT OF  
REMOVING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ITS SUPERSTRUCTURE  
AND, IN ITS PLACE. OFFERING THE PROSPECT OF SOME KIND OF  
WEST BANK/GAZA GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY UNDER AN ADMINISTRATIVE  
COUNCIL (PARAS 1-3). ALTHOUGH SOME MAY SAY THIS  
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL SIMPLY LEGITIMIZES CONTIN-  
UED ISRAELI CONTROL, IT IS TRUE THAT FOR FIRST TIME  
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A GOVERNMENTAL UNIT WOULD BE CREATED AND RUN BY  
PALESTINIANS AND RESPONSIBLE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF  
WEST BANK/GAZA AFFAIRS AS SPELLED OUT IN PARA 10 OF BEGIN PLAN.

3. OTHER ADVANTAGES WHICH HAVE BEEN MENTIONED ARE:  
(A) CHOICE OF CITIZENSHIP (PARAS 14-15); (B) PARTICI-  
PATION IN EITHER ISRAELI KNESSET OR JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

(PARAS 16-17); AND (C) POSSIBILITY FOR PALESTINIAN ARABS TO PURCHASE LAND IN ISRAEL (PARA 20). UNFORTUNATELY, TO MOST WEST BANKERS, THESE PROFFERED ADVANTAGES HAVE LITTLE ATTRACTION. THERE WOULD BE FEW ARABS WHO HAVE ANY INTEREST IN ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP, KNESSET ELECTION, OR EVEN PURCHASING LAND IN ISRAEL. EVEN IF THEY WERE INTERESTED IN THESE THINGS, WE SEE FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF ANY PALESTINIAN OBTAINING THESE BENEFITS.

4. ISRAELI NATURALIZATION LAW MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT AND LENGTHY PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP AND WE SEE NOTHING IN THE PLAN THAT WOULD ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS ANY SIMPLER. IN FACT, PARA 15 SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT GRANTING OF CITIZENSHIP WOULD BE "IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITIZENSHIP LAW OF THE STATE." WITHOUT ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP THE PLAN MAKES CLEAR THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PURCHASE LAND IN ISRAEL. IN SIMILAR FASHION, WITHOUT ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP PALESTINIANS COULD NOT VOTE FOR OR RUN IN THE KNESSET ELECTION.

5. DISADVANTAGES TO WEST BANKERS: BALANCED AGAINST THE ABOVE POSSIBLE BENEFITS THERE ARE THE FOLLOWING DISADVANTAGES: (A) CONTINUED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES FOR SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA (PARA 11); THIS MEANS CONTINUED ISRAELI CONTROL OF ACCESS TO AND FROM WEST BANK/GAZA AND PRESUMABLY A CONTINUED POLICE OR MILITARY PRESENCE  
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TO MAINTAIN SECURITY IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI INTERESTS INCLUDING THE MUCH-CRITICIZED BRIDGE CROSSING CONTROL. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE WORDING OF THE PLAN HOW SUCH AN ISRAELI PRESENCE WOULD DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT ISRAELI PRESENCE OR WHETHER CURRENT MILGOV REGULATIONS WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE. (B) RESTRICTION ON RIGHT TO RETURN BY PALESTINIANS LIVING OUTSIDE WEST BANK/GAZA (PARA 21); IT IS CLEAR FROM TEXT OF PARA 21 THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF ISRAEL WOULD HAVE VETO POWER OVER IMMIGRATION POLICY. (C) THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE AUTHORITY ONLY OVER ARAB RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AS STATED IN PARA 9. PRESUMABLY ISRAELI CITIZENS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WOULD STILL BE SUBJECT ONLY TO ISRAELI LAW.

6. BENEFITS TO ISRAELIS: AS FREIJ POINTED OUT, THERE WOULD INDEED BE POSITIVE BENEFITS TO ISRAELI CITIZENS IN THE BEGIN PLAN OVER THE CURRENT SITUATION. PARA 20 ENTITLES RESIDENTS OF ISRAEL TO ACQUIRE LAND AND SETTLE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THIS RIGHT IS CURRENTLY RESTRICTED, ALTHOUGH SOME ILLEGAL PURCHASES BY PROXY HAVE OCCURRED. IN ADDITION, PARA 22 GIVES RESIDENTS OF ISRAEL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND FREEDOM OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE ELIGIBILITY FOR

PARTICIPATING IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WOULD APPARENTLY NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL LAW.

7. ALTHOUGH IT IS BILLED AS A MAJOR CONCESSION BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME REASON TO QUESTION WHETHER PARA 24, WHICH LEAVES OPEN THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IS, IN FACT, MUCH DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE LIKUD PLATFORM HAS STATED. ISRAEL CONTINUES TO CLAIM ITS RIGHT AND SOVEREIGNTY BUT IS WILLING TO FOREGO ASSERTING THAT CLAIM FOR THE TIME BEING.

8. CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE PLAN ARE OPEN TO QUESTION EITHER BECAUSE OF AMBIGUITY OR LACK OF SUFFICIENT PRECISION. FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PARAGRAPH 5 SPEAKS OF A LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL BUT NOWHERE IN THE PLAN IS THERE ANY SPELLING OUT AS TO HOW OR BY WHOM THIS LIST WILL BE DRAWN UP. ALSO PARA 19 SPEAKS OF SETTING UP A COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE WHAT LAW WILL CONTINUE IN FORCE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND THAT THIS COMMITTEE SHALL MAKE ITS DECISIONS BY UNANIMITY. NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE DONE IN THE CASE OF DISAGREEMENTS OR DEADLOCKS IN THE CASE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN LAW. THE PLAN IS ALSO SILENT ON THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH MIGHT BE PERMITTED.

9. COMMENT: IN SUMMARY, ASIDE FROM THE BEGUILING PHRASE "SELF-RULE" AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A GOOD PORTION OF THE GOVERNING FUNCTIONS IN WEST BANK/GAZA, THE BOTTOM LINE OF BEGIN'S PLAN STILL MAINTAINS ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES IN CONTROL AND OTHER IMPORTANT ISRAELI SAFEGUARDS. THE EXPLICIT PROVISION PERMITTING ISRAELIS TO PURCHASE LAND AND SETTLE IN WEST BANK/GAZA LEADS WEST BANKERS TO FEAR THAT ISRAEL WILL INCREASINGLY TAKE OVER PHYSICALLY THEIR TERRITORY. CERTAINLY THE TWO WEST BANK GOALS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION ARE NOT TO BE ATTAINED BY THE BEGIN PLAN AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED. WEST BANKERS ACCORDINGLY DO NOT SEE IT AS A GOOD BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION.  
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